Utah valvata snail

Valvata utahensis

STATUS

Endangered (57 FR 59257, December 14, 1992)

DESCRIPTION

Utah valvata snails generally require cold, clean and well-oxygenated flowing water. They occur in areas with clean mud bottoms and submerged aquatic vegetation. Although they may live near cold-water springs or free-flowing mainstem river areas, the snails avoids areas with swift current or pure gravel-boulders. Utah valvata is about as high as it is wide, and is usually about 0.2 inches high.

HISTORY

This species was first collected by Call in 1884 at Utah Lake, Utah. In 1902, Walker formally described the species as Valvata utahensis. The Utah valvata snail is one of the few species that provide a glimpse into the history of the Snake River. Fossil collections lead some to suspect that this snail existed as early as the Pleistocene era. At one time, it was found in the prehistoric lakes and rivers covering parts of California, Nevada, Idaho, Wyoming and Utah.

DISTRIBUTION

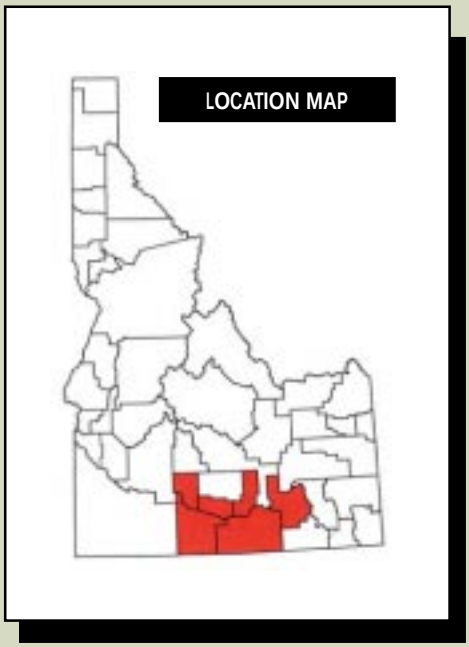
Today, Utah valvata is only found in a few springs and mainstem sites in the Middle Snake River from American Falls Reservoir to the Hagerman Valley.

WHAT HAS THREATENED THIS SPECIES?

Free-flowing, cold water environments required by this species have been altered by reservoir development, river diversions, and habitat modification. Also, water quality has deteriorated in the Snake River due to altered natural flow and pollution.

WHAT IS BEING DONE TO HELP RECOVER THIS SPECIES?

Water quality and habitat conditions in the mainstem Snake River must be improved to begin to recover the Utah valvata snail. Surveys by the Bureau of Reclamation and Idaho Power Company have increased the number of known sites for this species. Additional studies to address the temperature, substrate and flow requirements for this species will aid agency management of water quality and flow requirements needed to recover the species and the Snake River ecosystem.



REFERENCES

USFWS.1995. Snake River Aquatic Species Recovery Plan.